

OUTDOOR RECREATION PROJECT SELECTION SYSTEM
Massachusetts Urban Self-Help and Strategic Urban Recreation Fund Programs

In order to distribute limited grant funds among an overwhelming number of applicants, a project selection system has been developed for conservation land acquisition projects. The selection system includes an interagency review and rating of each project, and an evaluation of the applicant community's commitment to sustainable development criteria developed by the Office for Commonwealth Development. The rating system considers demographic, social, environmental, and project quality factors in order to identify those projects that best protect natural resources in communities that have the greatest need for financial assistance and that have made efforts to implement their open space plans in coordination with local planning for sustainable growth.

Interagency Review

DCS coordinates the interagency review of all applications and submits all comments and recommendations to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs for final funding decisions. The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' Interagency Lands Committee (ILC) reviews recreation project applications to ensure project coordination with state agency programs, executive orders and environmentally sound land use policies. The Committee consists of representatives from the Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Fish and Game, and Agricultural Resources, and can include other EOEa personnel. The ILC considers each project and its impact on the statewide conservation vision articulated in *An Open Space Plan for Massachusetts: A Partnership*, and *Massachusetts Outdoors 2000! – The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP).

In reviewing applications and developing their recommendations to the Director of Conservation Services, the ILC considers:

1. Demographics

Three categories are evaluated by DCS to calculate a community's demographic score. Communities with higher Population Density, lower Median Income, and higher Percentage of Households Below Poverty Level receive higher demographic scores. (Scores are calculated by DCS; therefore, there is no need to submit any statistics or narrative on your community's behalf.)

2. Community Profile Score

Environmental Justice Community – calculated by EOEa's EJ Director.

State Designated Economic Target Area – obtained from Department of Economic Development

Smart Growth Score – EOEa encourages land use decisions that protect environmental quality and preserve natural resources.

Unplanned growth not only threatens the environment, it also can adversely affect the timely provision of needed infrastructure, and has a tremendous fiscal impact on communities. This impact, in turn, puts future economic opportunities at risk. The Office for Commonwealth Development has developed sustainable development criteria and will evaluate and score each applicant community. Please submit a Commonwealth Capital Application for your community, available online at <http://www.mass.gov/ocd/comcap.html>, to obtain your score. Please direct any questions that you may have to Robert Mitchell at (617) 573-1383 or Kurt Gaertner at (617) 626-4949.

3. Project Quality

- Consistency with EOEa policies, including a cooperative grant effort, the development of a long term maintenance plan, protection of water-based recreation, regional or statewide projects, brownfields redevelopment, innovative water reuse/recharge, and park development associated with ecological restoration projects, such as dam removal
- Addition of new parkland by acquisition or rededication
- Green infrastructure
- Consistency with Massachusetts Outdoors 2000!

4. Partnerships

EOEA, like any other open space protection agency or organization, must have other financial partners. Projects that involve financial contribution from more than one municipality, or from a nonprofit organization, will be given higher consideration. Projects that obtain technical assistance from other organizations will also benefit in the rating system.

SELECTION NOTE: Preservation of Agricultural Land

Executive Order #193 discourages the irreversible conversion of the Commonwealth's productive agricultural land base. State grants shall not be used to encourage the irreversible conversion of agricultural land to other uses when feasible alternatives are available. In the event that all feasible alternatives have been explored, and the conversion of suitable agricultural lands to non-agricultural use remains the only feasible alternative to protection of open space, a mitigation plan must be developed to be eligible for reimbursement under a state grant. Project that would convert any prime agricultural lands should consult with the Department Agricultural Resources at (617) 626-1700 prior to submitting an application.

RATING SYSTEM for Outdoor Recreation Projects

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	Description	Partial Points	Max
DEMOGRAPHICS	Population Density	Figures are obtained from MISER and put into rank order by DCS	1-4	5
	Median Income	Figures are obtained from MISER and put into rank order by DCS	1-4	5
	Percentage of Households below Poverty Level	Figures are obtained from MISER and put into rank order by DCS	1-4	5
COMMUNITY PROFILE SCORE	Environmental Justice Community	Calculated by EOE's Environmental Justice Director	1-4	5
	State Designated Economic Target Area	Designated by the Department of Economic Development		2
	Sustainable Development Criteria – Smart Growth Score	Criteria developed by Office for Commonwealth Development and required for all "Commonwealth Capital" grant programs. Open Space and Recreation Plan, Housing Compliance, and Local Funding Initiatives among other criteria are considered (see http://www.mass.gov/ocd/comcap.html for details).	1-29	30
PROJECT QUALITY	Consistency with current EOE policies	Acquisition, development, or renovation project that protects or enhances water-based recreation	3	6
		Any project qualifying as regional or statewide (see definitions at www.mass.gov/envir/dcs)	3	6
		Innovative water recharge and reuse component i.e. on-site stormwater control system (including low impact development – more info at http://www.mass.gov/envir/lid/default.htm); or reuse of treated wastewater as irrigation water for playing fields		5
		Joint cooperative project between applicant and other municipality, or non-profit organization involving funding from all identified partners		2
		Long term maintenance plan for site including sources of funding and inflation increases		2
		Site offers interpretive services and/or environmental education		2
	Addition of newly dedicated parkland by acquisition or by rededication	Acquisition or formal dedication of parcel with unique natural (rare species, ACEC, geologic, or landscape feature), cultural resources (historical or archaeological), or wetlands	1-5	6
		Conversion of brownfields to "greenfields" and formal park dedication		
		Project that expands municipality's park and outdoor recreational facilities		
		Project is connected with or will enhance understanding of an environmental restoration project such as a dam removal		5
	Green Infrastructure	Project that is part of a linked system (geographical) of conservation, recreation, or protected land areas or facilities such as greenways, river corridors, or enhancement of project previously assisted with DCS funds, or that connect to major state, federal, or inter-municipal open space, contains resources identified in Five-Year Watershed Action Plans (http://www.mass.gov/envir/water/publications.htm)	1-5	6
	Consistency with <u>Mass Outdoor 2000!</u> and municipality's OSRP	Points awarded based on how high activity or facility rates under Chapter 5: The Regional Perspective	1-4	5
		Renovation project (upgrading existing facilities)	1-2	3
TOTAL				100